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Jessie Graham;

OR,

FRIENDS DEAR, BUT TRUTH DEARER.

BY

M. J. McINTOSH,

AUTHOR OF "BLIND ALICE," "ELLEN LESLIE," "GRACE AND
CLARA," "FLORENCE ARNOTT," ETC., ETC.

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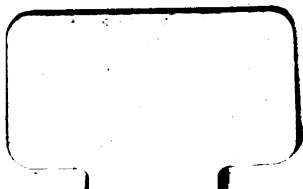
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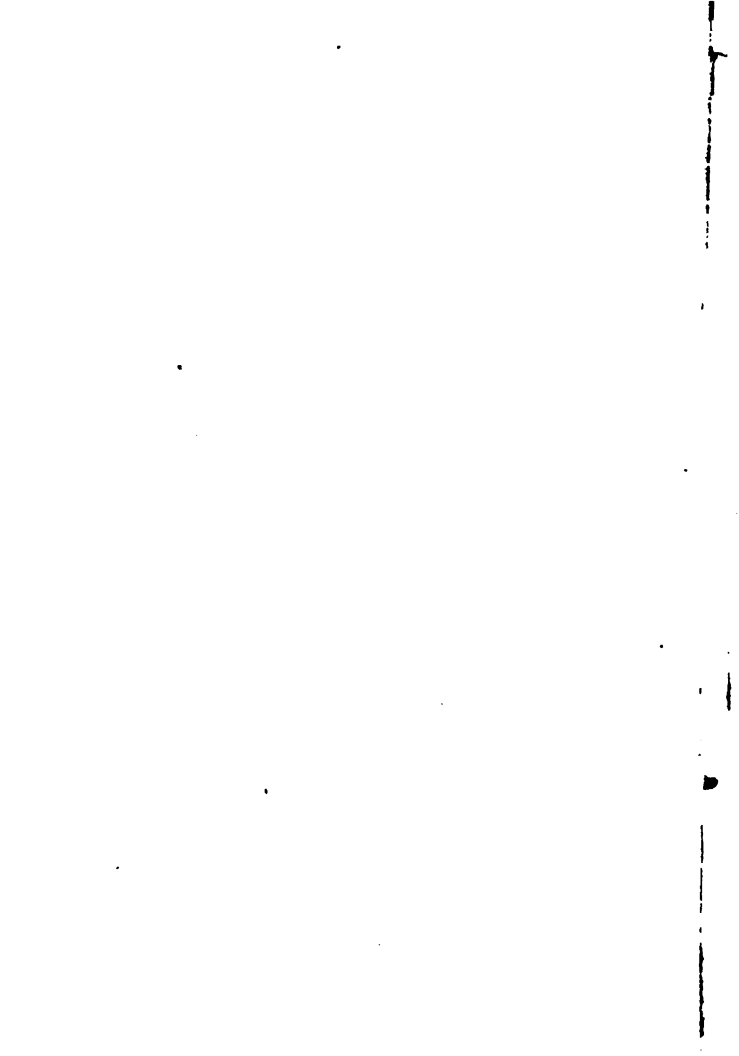
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Charles Batchelder

Christmas 1884





But Mary, who half ashamed and half angry, had stood with her eyes cast down.—Page 53.

James Garfield;

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and I stopped with Jessie, as I saw her father was at home and wanted to speak to him about some seeds. Old Mrs. Graham was seated in the low, shaded porch, knitting, and there I left the children showing her their treasures, while I stepped into the garden where Mr. Graham was at work. Having finished my talk with him I went into the house again. The children were still in the porch; and as I entered the parlor that opened on it, I heard Mary Mackay's earnest tone wishing that she could walk in the woods and pick flowers every day.

"Why, Mary!" said Harriet, "what then would become of your books and Miss Bennett?"—this was the name of Mary's governess.

"I would not care what became of them," said Mary hastily, then added: "Oh yes, I would care what became of Miss Bennett,—but as for the books—"

"Send them to me, Mary," said Jessie, "send

them to me, if you are tired of them, and send Miss Bennett with them."

"Why, Jessie, do you want to study lessons?"

"I don't know about the studying, Mary, how I should like that,—but I would be willing to try, rather than be a poor ignorant girl without any schooling, as Nancy Orme called me the other day."

I saw old Mrs. Graham turn quickly round at this, and heard her ask Jessie, "And what did you say to Nancy Orme?"

"Nothing, grandmother,—what could I say to her? It is the truth, you know."

"It is not the truth," said Mrs. Graham, "and you are a silly child to say so."

"Why, grandmother, what schooling have I ever had? You have taught me to read, and father has begun to teach me to write, and that is all I know or am like to know."

"You are a silly child, Jessie, as I said before. You have had the schooling which is better for

little Jessie Graham, the gardener's daughter, than any that Miss Bennett and her books could give."

Mary, who really loved Miss Bennett, colored up, and Mrs. Graham said to her, "Do not be vexed, my little lady, for I mean no offence. Miss Mary Mackay, who is to be a young *lady*, and must talk to ladies and gentlemen, cannot do without books and Miss Bennett to explain them. And I do not mean to say that book-learning hurts anybody, but only that Jessie, and poor little folks like Jessie, can do without it, and yet that they must not call themselves without schooling; for what schooling they really want, God takes care that they may have."

The girls looked puzzled, and as I had become quite interested in what the old woman was saying, I was not sorry when my inquisitive little niece, Mary, exclaimed, "Pray, Mrs. Graham, tell me what you mean, for I cannot see what

schooling little girls have who do not learn out of books."

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Graham, putting down her knitting, taking off her spectacles, and looking very thoughtful, "I do not know whether I can tell you just what I mean, so that you can understand me, but I will try. I think God means that every father and mother shall be teachers to their own children, or if the father and mother are dead, there is almost always some friend who is bound to take their place, and then he spreads out books on every side of them, so that they are almost obliged to read, unless they wilfully shut their eyes;—for if they look up, there is the sun in the day and the moon and stars at night, and though they cannot tell, as I am told some great scholars can do, how far off they are, and what the stars are named, they can see how much good they do to us, lighting and warming us, and dividing the year into seasons, which, everybody who knows anything of gardening knows, is a great

good, and making day and night. They can learn out of this book, too, a great deal of God's power and glory, for he must keep all these in their places, and make them all come back to us day after day, and night after night, and year after year, without ever failing once. Then, when they look down on the ground, there is another beautiful book. They may not be able to call everything there by its right name, but they may learn what is good to eat, and what for medicine, and what is only pretty to the eye,—what soil each plant loves, and how God has provided for each just what is best for it. And so, if they look at the birds, or the poultry, or the different animals, they will find each kind has its own ways, and from each one they may learn as many useful things as from any book that was ever made. Now, my dear young ladies, this is the schooling which God provided for us all, and though, as I said before, learning from books is very good, yet those who cannot get it, need not be altogether

ignorant, and of the two, maybe God's schooling is best for poor people."

Though I was very much pleased with what Mrs. Graham said, I was afraid my little girls would begin to think very slightly of books, so I stepped out, and telling them that it was time to go home, they gathered up their flowers, and bidding Mrs. Graham and Jessie good-morning, we set out. I waited a while, hoping that, as they did not know I had overheard Mrs. Graham, they would speak to me of what she had said. And so they did; for I had not waited long, when Mary said, "Aunt Kitty, do you not think Mrs. Graham is a very sensible woman?"

"Yes, my dear," I replied, "I do think she is a *very* sensible woman."

"I wish you could have heard her, Aunt Kitty, talking about Jessie's schooling—I liked what she said so much."

"And what did she say, Mary?"

"Oh, Aunt Kitty, I cannot remember half—but she said little girls need not study books."

"Not all little girls, Mary," said Harriet, interrupting her.

"Well, Harriet, not all little girls,—but she said that little girls who could not study books, might still have schooling,—for God gave them teachers, and then they might look at the stars, and the flowers, and the birds, and all the animals, and learn, Aunt Kitty, just as well as we do out of books, and I am sure it must be a much pleasanter way of learning."

"But how many little girls are there, Mary, do you think, who, if they had never studied books or been directed by such sensible teachers as Mrs. Graham herself, would look at the stars, and the flowers, and the birds, and learn from them all which they can teach? Unless we see something more in these than their bright light, their pretty colors, or their gay plumage, they will teach us little, and it is generally from books or from some

person who has had what Mrs. Graham calls book-learning, that we learn to look deeper."

"How did Mrs. Graham come to know so much about them then, Aunt Kitty, for I do not think she reads many books?"

"Mrs. Graham, my dear Mary, has been accustomed to associate with people much better educated than herself, and as she is a very observing and thoughtful person, she has lost no opportunity of learning. And now, Mary, you see that book-learning is of more use than you ever before thought it, for the person who has it, may help to open the eyes of many who have it not, to read what God has written for us all in the heavens and the earth."

CHAPTER II.

THE SCHOOL.

THE next morning before Harriet and I had breakfasted, Mary came running in, her cheeks glowing and eyes sparkling with pleasure, crying out even before she had said good-morning, "Aunt Kitty, Jessie is to go to school with me and study lessons,—she is to begin to-day, and I am going to tell her to get ready at once, so I have not a minute to stay."

"Stop, stop, my dear," said I, seizing her hand as she was passing me; "just catch your breath and then tell us how all this was arranged."

"Oh, I told Miss Bennett how much Jessie wanted to go to school, and she said she might

come if my father had not any objection, and I asked my father, and he said he had not any,—but I must go, Aunt Kitty, indeed I must,” and breaking away from me, she bounded off.

She soon came back bringing the smiling Jessie with her, and from that day Jessie might be seen every morning about nine o'clock going to her school. She spent only two hours there each day, but as she really wished to learn, she improved very much, and Miss Bennett said, she repaid her for all trouble in teaching her, by her good example to our good-humored but wild little Mary. Jessie seemed to think she could never say or do enough to thank Mary for inducing Miss Bennett to give her lessons, and though Mary loved Jessie, and would never let any one find the least fault with her without a warm defence, I sometimes feared that Jessie's perfect submission to her will in all things would do her harm—that she would become quite a little despot. But a circumstance which happened in their school

a short time after Jessie's lessons with Miss Bennett began, taught us that there was one thing Jessie loved better even than she loved Mary. I will relate the circumstance, and you will find out what that one thing was.

Mary's father had a fine flock of sheep, and one morning as Mary stood by him while he counted them, watching the lambs frisking from side to side, Jessie came from the house to tell her that Miss Bennett had been waiting some time for her.

"Stay just one minute, Jessie, and then I will go back with you," said the little idler; "I want papa to be done counting, that I may beg him for a little lamb—I want a pet lamb. See there, Jessie—that one that is running along so fast, and then stops to wait for the others, is not it a beauty? Oh! do, papa, give it to me," said she, as her father counted the thirtieth sheep, for she knew that this was the full number.

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"Give you what, my child?" asked her father, who had not been paying any attention to her.

"That pretty lamb, papa—make haste to say yes, for there is Miss Bennett's bell ringing for the third time. Stop, Jessie," said the little despot, catching hold of her as she would have run in, "you shall not go till I am ready."

"I am sorry my daughter should let anything keep her from her lessons. Besides, you are treating Miss Bennett with great disrespect, and here she comes herself to see what has become of her truants."

As Mr. Mackay spoke, he took Mary's hand and walked with the children towards the piazza where Miss Bennett stood. He is a very good-natured man, and makes such a pet of his little daughter, that he was quite ready to excuse her; so, as Miss Bennett was about to speak to Mary, he said, "I believe, Miss Bennett, I must ask you to excuse her want of punctuality to-day, for the fault was partly mine. If I had not been as much

engaged in counting my sheep as she was in watching the lambs at play, I should have heard your bell and sent her to you.'

"I do not wish to punish the fault of to-day," said Miss Bennett, with a smile, "but to reform a habit persisted in for many days. Can you not aid me, sir, in devising some mode by which Mary may be reminded that her studies are of more importance than her play?"

"Yes, she has just been presenting a petition which I will not grant till she can bring me proof that she has been punctual and attentive to her studies for two months."

"Two whole months, papa?" said Mary, looking quite frightened at the length of time.

"Yes, my daughter, two whole months, and—stay, where is Jessie?" looking around for her.

"Stolen away, I suppose," said Miss Bennett, "for fear of hearing Mary scolded. We shall probably find her in the schoolroom."

"Well, I will go there with you," said Mr.

Mackay, entering the house with the wondering Mary. On they went, Miss Bennett leading the way to the schoolroom, where, as she had conjectured, they found Jessie, looking very gravely.

"Do not be afraid, Jessie," said Mary, laughing, as she entered, "Miss Bennett has not beaten me. Papa is going to do something to us both, I think, but I do not know what."

"You shall soon hear," said Mr. Mackay. "If Miss Bennett will be so kind as to give to the one who recites the best lesson a card marked merit; and to the one who is not in her place by the time the bell has ceased ringing, a blank card, for two months to come, we will then count both kinds of tickets: for every blank card we will take away one from the others, and to the little girl who has most merit cards left I will give—listen, Mary—the prettiest lamb in my flock."

"I will gladly agree to perform my part in the arrangement," said Miss Bennett, "but will add another stipulation. As I would have my little

pupils careful, as well as studious and attentive, I will make no note of the tickets given for merit, and the girl who loses her tickets will therefore suffer the consequences."

"Do you understand?" said Mr. Mackay.

"Oh yes," said Mary, eagerly clapping her hands, "and I mean to have the lamb."

"Yes, sir," said the smiling Jessie—pleased to see her friend so happy.

"Well," said Mr. Mackay, as he left the schoolroom, "you will begin to-morrow."

For some time Miss Bennett had no blanks to give and few merit cards, for the girls were always in their places at the proper time, and both knew their lessons so perfectly that it could not with truth be said either was *best*. After some weeks, however, things fell into their old course. Mary got most blanks, and most merit cards too, for though Jessie was both quick and studious, she had less time for study; and what is of more consequence, she had no one at home to help her out of

difficulties by explaining what she did not understand. Besides, as Mary had been much longer at school than her friend, the lessons which she was going over for the second, or perhaps third time, were quite new to Jessie, who felt her friend's advantages on this account to be so great that she never dreamed there was any probability of receiving the prize herself.

CHAPTER III.

MARY—MORE GENEROUS THAN JUST.

HARRIET and I walking over one pleasant afternoon to my brother's, met Jessie sauntering slowly home, and Mary with her. We stopped to chat a while with them, and then Mary, bidding Jessie good-by, turned back with us. While I walked steadily on, she and Harriet were sometimes by my side, sometimes running before me, and sometimes lingering far behind. As we approached the house, we saw the sheep driven to their pen for the night. The children were before me, but near enough for me to hear Mary exclaim, "Harriet, there is my lamb—that is the one I mean to choose—if it does not grow too large before the time."

"Maybe you will not have to choose at all," said Harriet, "for Jessie may get it."

"Indeed she will not," said Mary.

"How do you know that?" asked Harriet; "only one month is gone. I wish she may get it."

"I do not think that is very kind of you," said Mary, "to wish that Jessie should get it instead of me, when you know I want the lamb so much."

"Why, Mary," said Harriet, "though you may not get it just at this particular time, you know your father would give you one afterwards if you asked for it, and poor Jessie may never have another chance to get one. Besides, I think it will do her a great deal more good than you."

"I do not see how," said Mary, still in a dissatisfied tone.

"Why," said Harriet, "you know she knits her own stockings, and her father has to buy wool—

now, she could have the wool from her own lamb without paying anything for it."

"I never thought of that," said Mary, earnestly, while I could not but smile at Harriet's forethought. "But, Harriet, I should like to get the lamb," said Mary, after thinking a while, "and then I could give it to Jessie, you know."

"But are you sure Jessie would take it from you?"

"Oh yes! I could make her take it," said Mary, confidently.

"I do not know that," said Harriet, "if her grandmother told her not; and you know Aunt Kitty told us Mrs. Graham never would take anything for herself when she was very poor."

"Well," said Mary, in a perplexed tone, "what shall I do?—for I want her to have it now as much as you do, since you put me in mind how much good it will do her. Oh! I will tell you, Harriet, what I will do; I will not study at all,

and so I cannot get any merit cards, and I will stay out late, and get all the blanks."

As I did not quite approve of Mary's very ingenious plan for obliging Jessie, I stepped up and said, "Do you think that would be quite right to your papa and Miss Bennett, who are trying by the offer of this reward to make you more studious and punctual?"

"Well, what shall I do, Aunt Kitty?"

"Do your best, my dear, to win the reward, and let Jessie do the same. The habits you are thus forming will be of far more consequence to you than the lamb to Jessie."

"But I want Jessie to have it," said Mary, whose generous feelings had now been excited; "besides, I do not think it is a fair trial, for Jessie has so little time to study."

"Then, Mary, suppose you and Harriet go every day and help her in her work at home, so that she may have more time for study."

"So we will," said Mary, with great animation;

"that is a real good plan ; and I will tell you what, Aunt Kitty, I will study and get the tickets, since you say I ought, but before Miss Bennett counts them, I will make Jessie take some of my merit cards, and I will take some of her blanks, so as to be sure that she will have the most ; so, you see, I will have the good habits, and she will have the lamb, too. Will not that be clever ?"

"Very clever on your part, Mary, but I hope you will not find it easy to make Jessie do a thing which in her would be very wrong. Better lose the lamb than be dishonest."

"Dishonest, Aunt Kitty !"

"Yes, Mary, would it not be dishonest in Jessie to get the lamb by making your father and Miss Bennett believe that tickets which are in reality yours, have been won by her ?"

Mary looked quite grave for a minute, then brightening up, said, "Well, Harriet, at any rate it is not wrong to help Jessie, so I will come for you to-morrow morning."

“Very well,” said Harriet, “I will go with you, and when we have done all the work, I will help Jessie get her lessons; so, maybe, she may have the most tickets without taking yours.”

Mary colored, and though she said nothing, I could not help thinking that she would rather Jessie should get the lamb by any other means than by having the most tickets.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DISAPPOINTMENT—THE SECRET.

THE next morning Mary came over quite early for Harriet, and they ran to Mr. Graham's full of glee ; but they had been gone a very little while, when they came back looking quite vexed. On my asking what was the matter, Mary answered, "That cross Mr. Graham would not let us do anything."

"Why, Mary, I never heard Mr. Graham called cross before."

"Well, Aunt Kitty, he was cross, for Jessie was very glad to see us, and wanted us to help her pick strawberries, and he would not let us do it,

but said we would tread on the vines—as if we never picked strawberries before.”

“Perhaps, Mary, you never did pick them where it was so important to be careful of the vines. You know Mr. Graham’s garden is his only means of support. But had Jessie nothing else to do which you could have done for her?”

“I do not know,” said Mary; “we were so vexed that we would not ask to do anything else.”

“Do not say *we*, Mary,” said Harriet, “for I would have asked old Mrs. Graham to let me count the eggs and feed the chickens, which Jessie said was all she had to do besides picking the strawberries, before school, but you were so angry and talked so loud, that I thought it was better to come away.”

Mary looked very much ashamed, and hung her head, as she said, “Well, Aunt Kitty, it is very hard when we mean to do good to be scolded for it.”

“And did Mr. Graham scold you, Mary?”

“He looked cross at us, Aunt Kitty, if he did not scold.”

“Mr. Graham might have looked not very well pleased, at the thought of having his fine strawberry-plants trampled, and still have felt obliged by your kind feelings to Jessie. But I fear that my little niece must have been thinking more of herself than of Jessie, more of the credit which Mary Mackay deserved, than of the assistance she was going to give, or she would not, because she found one service declined, have been unwilling to offer to help her friend in some other way.”—As I spoke I put my arm around Mary and drew her to me.—“Was it not so, Mary?”—she hid her face on my shoulder and was silent,—“Think of it, Mary, and tell me if I am right.”

In about a minute Mary raised her head, and said very frankly, “Yes, Aunt Kitty, I believe you are right; and now, if Harriet will go with me, I will go back and see if we can do anything else for Jessie.”

But Harriet exclaimed, "We need not go, Mary, for here is Jessie herself; and now we will tell her what we meant to do, and if she would like it, we will go to-morrow."

Jessie was much pleased with the kind intentions of her young friends, and assured them that they could help her very much, for they could count the eggs, feed the chickens, and put the kitchen pantry in order, all which she generally did before coming to school. From this time Jessie was able to study more, and with Harriet's aid, her lessons were well learned. Still she gained few merit cards, for Mary studied too, and was very punctual, seeming quite in earnest about the prize, which she nevertheless declared, steadily and positively, would be Jessie's. At this declaration Jessie only laughed, but Harriet seemed quite puzzled, saying that she knew by Mary's looks she had some plan in her head. And so it proved she had. The two months which had seemed to Mary, when her father first named

them, so long, were ended at last. Two days before the tickets were to be counted by Miss Bennett, Mary begged Jessie to bring hers with her to school, that she might see how many they would each have before they were given in.

"It is of no use, Mary," said Jessie, "for I know exactly how many I have, and I know you have more than twice as many merit cards."

"I know I have more than twice as many blanks," said Mary, "but that is nothing, Jessie. I want to see your cards, and I think you might bring them when I ask you."

"And so I will bring them, Mary," said Jessie; and when she came the next morning she brought a neat little box, which she held up to Mary as soon as she came in sight, calling out, "Here are my cards."

"That is right, Jessie," said Mary; "now you must leave them with me, and to-morrow morning they will be here ready for you."

"Well, Mary," said Jessie, as somewhat reluc-

tantly she gave them up, "take care of them, because though I cannot get the lamb I would like Miss Bennett to see that I have been careful of my cards as she wished us to be."

Mary promised, and put the box very carefully into a basket where her own cards were kept.

CHAPTER V.

JESSIE'S TRUTH.

ON the day appointed, Harriet and I went over by Miss Bennett's request, to see the prize delivered to her who should be found to deserve it. A lamb had been chosen by Mr. Mackay, and without telling Mary anything of it, he had had a small silver collar engraved, "reward of merit." After the lamb had been washed as white as snow, this had been put on it, and a blue riband tied to the collar by which the lamb might be led, so that Jessie, should she win it, would have no difficulty in getting it home. As I entered my brother's house, I met Jessie and Mary in the piazza. Mary was talking very earnestly, and I heard her say,

"There is your box, Jessie. Don't open it till you give it to papa."

"But I must open it, Mary. I want to divide the cards, so as not to give Mr. Mackay much trouble."

"Nonsense, Jessie—what does papa care for trouble? You must *not* open it, I tell you. I have counted the cards, and you will have the lamb."

"Mary, how can you laugh at me so? you know that I cannot get it."

At this moment Mary was called away by her mother. I had watched her closely, and I thought I could see some roguery in the demure smile which played around her mouth, in spite of her evident efforts to be serious. As soon as she was out of sight, Jessie seated herself on the steps and took out her tickets. They were already made into parcels, and I saw her turn her eyes with a wondering look from one to the other,—then she loosed the string which tied each parcel together,

counted them rapidly, and then, dropping them into the box, said, "What does this mean?"

I began to be quite interested in this little mystery, of which I suspected Mary knew more than anybody else, so when I went into the school-room, I took my seat at a window, the sash of which was raised, and which overlooked the piazza, and kept my eye on Jessie. I was scarcely seated before Mary ran up to her. As soon as she was near enough to see the box opened and the cards loosed, she cried out in a vexed tone, "And so, Jessie, you would open the box after all?"

"Oh, Mary!" said Jessie, "it is the strangest thing—my blank cards are almost all gone, and here are a great many more merit cards than I had. Where can they come from?"

Mary seemed very much amused, and said, "Why, Jessie, I think a good fairy must have put them there."

Jessie looked up into her laughing face for a moment, and then said, "Now, Mary, I know how

it came—you put them there just to tease me. Make haste and let us get them right before they call us. I ought to have ten merit cards and four blanks, and here are only two blanks and seventeen merit cards. Take yours, Mary, and give me mine—quick—before Miss Bennett calls us.”

As she spoke she held out the box, but Mary stepped back, saying very positively, “Indeed, Jessie, I will not do any such thing.”

Jessie looked at her a moment, and seeing by her countenance that she was resolved not to do it, turned round, saying, “Well, I must go and tell your father just how it is.”

She went towards the door, but before she reached it, Mary caught her and drew her back, saying, as she did so, “Jessie, if you say a word to my father or Miss Bennett or anybody about it, I will never play with you again or love you, as long as I live.”

Her face was red, and she spoke in a very angry tone.

"Oh! don't talk so, Mary," said Jessie, "please don't talk so. You would not have me tell your father a story, and it would be just like telling him a story if I gave him your cards for mine."

"You need not give them to him," said Mary, "I will do it myself, and Aunt Kitty said it would not be any harm in me to do it. I told you that you would have the lamb, and I am determined you shall have it."

"But I don't want it," said Jessie; "I hate the lamb, and I don't want it."

"It is very ungrateful in you to say so, and I know you do it just to vex me. I know you cannot help wanting that pretty little lamb with its silver collar; and then it would please your father and mother and grandmother so much to see the reward of merit on it."

"But what good would their being pleased do me when I knew I had told a story to get it?" said Jessie mournfully.

"You are very obstinate, Jessie," said Mary ;
"did not I tell you that you need not say a word,
and that I would give papa the cards myself—so
how can you tell a story about it? Besides, I
will tell him the whole truth by-and-by, when I
have had my fun out."

"Will you, Mary, will you tell him the whole
truth—and is it only just for fun?"

"To be sure it is, or I would not say so,—so
now, Jessie, give me the cards at once like a good
girl, and I will love you so dearly," kissing her as
she spoke, "and just go in the schoolroom quietly,
and look as sober as you can while they are count-
ing them."

With a reluctant hand Jessie gave up the box,
saying, "Remember, Mary, it is just for fun, and
you will tell your father before I go home."

"I will tell him in the right time," said Mary ;
"but if you do not make haste into the schoolroom
we will not be there in the right time;" and she

ran quickly and joyously in—while Jessie followed more slowly and timidly.

Mary went straight to her father, who sat with Miss Bennett near a table, and gave him first a parcel containing her own cards, then handing him the box, said, "Jessie's are in this box, papa." Her father took them, smilingly, from her, and she then came and stood by Jessie, who had placed herself not far from me. The cards were counted. In Mary's parcel were twenty merit cards and eight blanks, which, taken from the others, left her only twelve. Jessie, it was found, had only two blanks to be taken from seventeen merit cards; she could therefore count fifteen, and the lamb was declared to be hers. I had looked steadily upon her while my brother and Miss Bennett were counting, and I saw that she looked very pale except once when she caught Miss Bennett's eye, and then her face become very red, and her eyes filled with tears. As my brother said, "Jessie has won the prize," she looked imploringly at

Mary and whispered, "Now, Mary—please, Mary, tell him now,"—but Mary turned away and seemed not to hear her.

My brother went into the next room and led in the lamb.

Again I heard Jessie's pleading tones, "Now, Mary—please, Mary, now,"—but Mary said nothing.

The lamb was led up to Jessie, and my brother, saying to her, "Here is your prize, my good little girl, which you have well deserved," would have put the riband into her hand, but instead of taking it, she covered her face with her hands and sobbed out, "I cannot take it, sir—indeed I cannot take it, for it is not mine, it is Mary's, and I must tell if she should be ever so angry with me."

Mr. Mackay looked around as for some one to explain Jessie's meaning, but as no one said anything, he again addressed himself to Jessie herself: "But, my dear, why should you not take it? Perhaps you think, because Mary had most merit

cards, the lamb should have been hers,—but you must remember, she had so many more blanks to be taken from them, that they left her with less than you. As for Mary's being angry with you, I am sure you need not be afraid of that,—Mary is not so selfish and unjust as to be angry with her friend for doing better than herself."

"Oh no, sir! that is not it—Mary wanted me to have the lamb, but—"

Jessie stopped, and Miss Bennett now came up to Mr. Mackay and said, "I believe I can explain this. Jessie is very properly grieved at having done a very wrong thing. You may remember that I said I would keep no account of the merit cards given, in order to induce the children to be careful, but Jessie seems to have forgotten that I did not say the same of the blanks; of these I did take note, and I am grieved to find, on reference to my memorandum, that two of Jessie's blanks have been added to Mary's."

Miss Bennett spoke in a very grave tone, and

looked at Jessie very severely. She would have said something more, but Mary—who, half ashamed and half angry, had stood with her eyes cast down and the corners of her mouth twitching as if she were just ready to cry—now looked up and interrupted her by exclaiming, “You are very wrong indeed, Miss Bennett, to think Jessie had anything to do with it. It was I that did it, on purpose that Jessie might have the lamb, and she never knew a word of it till just as we came in, and then she begged me to tell, and I would not. So there—it is all told now—and the next time I try to give anybody anything, it shall be some one who will be more grateful for it than Jessie.”

Poor Jessie! she cried as if her heart would break, and tried to take Mary’s hand while she said, “Indeed, indeed, Mary, I could not help it.”

But Mary would not be coaxed—she withdrew her hand and turned sullenly away. Mr. Mackay looked at her sorrowfully, then stooping down he

unclasped the collar from the lamb's neck, and tying the riband in its place, held it to her while he said, "You have won the prize, Mary,—take it—but I must take off the collar. I cannot give a reward of *merit* to a girl who thinks a lamb more valuable than truth and honesty."

It was now Mary's turn to weep and Jessie's to defend her. "Oh! sir, do not blame Mary—it was all from kindness to me, sir—indeed it was—and you know, sir, Mary would not tell a story for anything in the world."

"And yet Mary wished you, Jessie, to tell a story, and to take what you knew did not justly belong to you, and now is angry with you because you were not willing to do so. Either Mary is not very kind to you, or, as I said before, she values more the lamb she would have given you, than the truth and honesty she would have had you give up for it."

Jessie was silenced for a minute, and though Mary continued to weep, it was more gently. Mr.

Mackay stood before the children, still holding the lamb,—which Mary seemed as little disposed to take as Jessie,—and looking very gravely. At length Jessie raised her eyes to him and said, “I do not think Mary is angry with me because I would not take the lamb, sir; she is only a little vexed because I did not do as she wanted me to.”

We all smiled as Jessie said this, and Mr. Mackay answered, “I believe you are quite right, my dear little girl,”—then, putting his hand on Mary’s head, he added, “My daughter, we will leave you alone for a little while, to think whether you are most sorry that Jessie Graham has lost the prize, or that Mary Mackay has not had her own way altogether.”

He was turning away when Mary spoke, though in so low a tone that no one could hear her. Mr. Mackay, putting his head down to her, asked what she said, and she repeated, “I do not think it was wrong in me to want Jessie to get the lamb and to give her my cards that she might get it.”

“Are you quite sure, Mary, that you did wish Jessie to win the prize? Do you think you would have been pleased that she should have got the lamb in any other way than by your giving it to her? Still, however this may be, the wish to give it was generous, and far from thinking it wrong, I am more pleased with it in my daughter, than even with her studiousness and punctuality;—but, was it right in you, when your kind intention could not be accomplished without a very wrong action in Jessie, to wish that she should do it, and to be angry with her because she would not? Ought you to have thought so much more of your generosity than of Jessie’s truth?” Mr. Mackay waited a little while for an answer, then said, “Speak, Mary—was this right?”

While her father had been speaking to her, Mary had ceased to weep, though she still kept her head down, and her face covered with her hands. Even now she could not lift her eyes,

though she raised her head a little as she said, almost in a whisper, "No, papa."

Jessie, whose eyes had been fixed upon Mary with the most earnest, anxious look you can imagine, now put her arm quickly around her neck, exclaiming in a joyful tone, "Then, Mary, you will not be vexed with me any more, will you?"

"No, Jessie," said Mary, kissing her, "it was very wicked in me to be vexed with you just because you were good."

"Now, my dear Mary," said Mr. Mackay, "in taking blame for your own fault, and giving to your friend the credit she deserves, you are indeed generous, and I may now put back the lamb's collar—you *merit* the reward."

As he spoke, he kissed both the little girls. Mary sprang into her father's arms and hid her face on his shoulder. As she did so, I saw there were tears in her eyes, yet she smiled and looked very happy. In a little while she looked up, and

seeing Jessie seated on the floor playing with the lamb, said, laughing, "Why, Jessie, I thought you hated the lamb."

"Not now, Mary," said Jessie, "I love it now."

And now it will be easy for my little readers to see that the one thing which Jessie loved more than Mary was "Truth."

CHAPTER VI.

THE COW.

It was but a few weeks after this, that, as Harriet and I were one evening passing Mr. Graham's house, we saw a man tying a rope around the neck of his fine cow, which was noted everywhere for her gentleness and for the quantity of milk she gave. In the yard, not far from the cow, stood Mr. Graham. He was looking very serious, but did not say anything. But poor Jessie!—her arm was over the cow's neck and her face rested against her side, while she sobbed so loudly that we heard her before we reached the gate. As I did not quite understand what was going on, I hesitated a little about entering, but Mr. Graham

saw me, and stepping up opened the gate. As I went in, I said to him, "What is the matter with my friend Jessie?"

He tried to smile as he replied, "Only parting with the cow, ma'am. It is very foolish in her to take on so;—but she has always fed her, and so the creature knows and follows her, and Jessie feels as if she was just like a friend."

"But why are you parting with your cow, Mr. Graham?"

Mr. Graham colored and turned a little away from me as he said, "It is not just convenient to me to keep her at present, ma'am."

I saw from his manner that it would pain him to have me ask further about his reasons for selling her. Supposing that the cow was already sold, I asked who had bought her.

"Nobody yet, ma'am," said Mr. Graham, "I am only sending her to town to be sold."

"Then I am very glad I came here before she went," said I, "for I should like very much to

own her, and I will give you gladly whatever you expected to get for her in town."

Jessie looked up at this, and as she saw her father hesitate, cried out, "Oh yes! do, father, sell her to Aunt Kitty, and I can see poor Mooly sometimes; and then too, if you are ever rich enough to buy her back, I know she will let you have her again."

"You are a foolish thing," said Mr. Graham, as he put his hand kindly on Jessie's head, for we had walked together to the cow—then turning to me, he told me he would be very glad to sell the cow to one who he knew would use her well. The business was soon arranged. The cow was to be taken home at once to my house; but she need not be tied, for Jessie would lead her there, and there was no difficulty in getting her to follow Jessie. Mr. Graham went along with us too, to receive his money. Before Jessie left us I begged her to feed the cow for me.

"That I will, ma'am," said the delighted girl,

“and if you will let me, I will come every evening and give her her supper, for I am sure she will like it better, if she takes it from me.”

“I shall be very much obliged to you, Jessie, and as your friend Mooly may not be quite so gentle with strangers as with you, if you will come over and keep her quiet when she is milked in the morning, you will be doing me a favor, and then you can carry back the cup of warm milk which Harriet tells me your grandmother drinks every morning.”

Jessie looked at me for a moment with a happy smile, and then said, “Oh, ma’am! how glad I am that you walked by our house this evening. This will be almost as good as having Mooly at home ourselves.”

CHAPTER VII.

SORROW AND SYMPATHY.

I COULD not easily forget poor Jessie's distress, and I found myself often thinking what could have made Mr. Graham sell so good a cow. Surely, I said to myself, it cannot be that he is poorer than he has been, and in want of money which he could not get in any other way. I knew that he had had rheumatism so badly during the past winter, that he had not been able to get out to work till quite late in the spring; but, notwithstanding this, as the seasons had been favorable, his garden did not seem to have suffered much. Besides, his family were so prudent and industrious, that I thought they always spent less in the year than

he made, and so, that he was able every year to lay up some money against worse times. Jessie came over every morning to see her friend Mooly milked, and to take a mug of milk to her grandmother, which Harriet took care should be large enough to give the children some milk with their breakfast. In the evening she was always ready to give Mooly her supper; and as I saw her, day after day, come skipping and singing along, I felt comforted about her father's circumstances, for I was sure that Jessie at least had not heard of his being in any great distress or difficulty. One morning a servant came to me to ask whether Jessie should be waited for, as it was, she said, quite time the milking was done, and Jessie was not yet in sight.

"Oh yes! pray, Aunt Kitty, wait," said Harriet; "she will be here presently, I am sure she will—just wait five minutes."

As she spoke, she ran to the window to watch for Jessie, and soon called out, "Here's Jessie;

but how slow she comes ! Do, Aunt Kitty, look ! —You said, the other day, Jessie never walked, and I am sure she is walking now as slowly as her grandmother could. Why, now, she has stopped and turned around as if she was not coming at all. Why, I do believe she is crying ! What can be the matter ?”

She darted out of the room as she finished speaking, and when I reached the window through which she had been looking, she was already standing beside Jessie with her arm around her, talking to her. For a long time Jessie did not speak, but when she did, she seemed very much in earnest, while Harriet listened with an expression of the most eager interest. At length Jessie’s story, whatever it was, was ended, and Harriet seemed to have comforted her, for she wiped her eyes, and looked more cheerful as they passed the window where I stood, walking hand in hand to the yard where the cow and the dairy woman were waiting for them. In a little while, Jessie passed

by again on her way home. As she dropped a courtesy to me and wished me good-morning, I saw that her eyes were still red and her face swollen with weeping, though she had pushed her bonnet entirely off her head, that the cool breeze might take away the inflammation. Jessie was such a merry-hearted child that I felt it could be no trifling thing which had distressed her so much; yet I would not ask Harriet anything about it, because I was sure she would speak of it herself, if Jessie had not made her promise to keep it secret, and if she had, I would have been sorry that she should do anything so dishonorable as to mention it. There was a servant in the room when she came in, and I saw that Harriet was quite restless during the few minutes that she stayed. As soon as she went out, Harriet closed the door after her and began, "Oh, Aunt Kitty! I am so sorry. Jessie is going away, and Mr. Graham and all—going to some far-off place in the West. And Jessie says her

father has lost a great deal of money, and that he is so poor he cannot pay for his place, and so they are going to take it from him. Jessie heard Mr. Butler talking to him about it this morning, and she says Mr. Butler—”

“Stop, stop, Harriet, if Jessie only overheard a conversation between her father and Mr. Butler she was very wrong to repeat it to you, and the wrong must not go any further—you must not tell it even to me.”

“Oh, but, Aunt Kitty, Mr. Graham told Jessie he did not mind her telling anybody except her grandmother. He does not want old Mrs. Graham to know it yet; I do not know why. It was Mr. Graham’s talking about his mother that made Mr. Butler tell him, Jessie says, that, if he thought he would be able to pay him next year, he would wait for his money till then; but Mr. Graham said something about a bank breaking down—I did not quite understand that, Aunt Kitty,—but at any rate, all his money was in it, and he told Mr.

Butler that he never expected to be able to pay him, and that he must take the house back. Mr. Butler said that he would try to get some one to buy it who would not want it till next year, so that Mr. Graham need not go till then ; but then, Aunt Kitty, they will have to go."

"I am very sorry for it, Harriet, very sorry indeed."

"I knew you would be, Aunt Kitty, and I told Jessie so, and that you would try to think of something to help her father, and maybe they would not have to go at all."

Harriet was silent and looked earnestly in my face for a minute, then finding I did not answer her, she said, softly, "Will you not, Aunt Kitty, will you not help Mr. Graham?"

"Most gladly, Harriet, if I can, but I do not yet see how. You know I am not very rich just now myself."

Harriet looked quite discouraged and thought-

ful for a while, then said, "Could not Uncle Mackay help him?"

"You know that your uncle is about to travel on account of your aunt's health, and you may have heard him complain of being kept here much longer than he wished, in consequence of the difficulty of getting the money which is necessary for himself. Besides, Harriet," said I, interrupting her as she was about to speak, "I feel sure, from what I know of Mr. Graham, that he would not take the money he needs, as a *gift* from anybody, while he is well and strong, and only to lend it to him would be doing him little service, since it would be as difficult to pay it back as to pay for his house."

Harriet looked quite desponding, and said, "Poor Jessie, she will have to go, then."

"There is but one way, Harriet, which I now think of to prevent it. I have heard Mr. Graham say that he had more leisure than he liked, and that he could very well attend to another garden

besides his own and your Uncle Mackay's. Now, if we could get more work and more wages for him he could, perhaps, hire a house for the present, and might in time again lay up money enough to buy."

"That's it, Aunt Kitty—that's it—that is the very best plan," said Harriet, eagerly; "do let me run over and tell Jessie about it."

"Wait, Harriet, till we see some prospect of succeeding in it, before we say anything to Jessie. After breakfast we will go over to your uncle's, and see if we can learn anything from him likely to profit Mr. Graham."

Before I had left the breakfast table, Harriet called out, "Aunt Kitty, here are Uncle Mackay and Mr. Graham coming this way." When they reached my gate, however, Mr. Graham passed on towards his own house, and my brother came in alone. He had just heard from Mr. Graham, that he would probably be obliged to leave us soon, and seemed much grieved

about it. Mr. Graham had told him that his father had leased his house and garden from Mr. Butler for twenty-one years—that is, had engaged for that time to pay a certain sum of money every year for them. When the twenty-one years were out, Mr. Graham had offered to buy them, on condition that he should not be asked to pay the money for ten years. During this time, he had every year put by something towards paying this debt in a savings bank, and now, when the ten years wanted but a very few months of being ended, and he thought himself quite ready to pay for his house, he discovered that the bank had failed, or, as Harriet said, broken—that is, that it had nothing with which to pay him and others whom it owed.

My brother thought my plan for helping Mr. Graham would be a very good one, if we could only find the work and the wages; but this he feared would not be easy, as there were few persons in the neighborhood who employed a gardener.

"There is my friend Dickinson," he said at length, "who told me, when I saw him last, that he intended to dismiss his gardener, because he could not keep his children out of the garden, where they were for ever annoying him by trampling on his flower-beds and breaking his flowers. This would be an excellent place, for he gives his gardener a very pretty house and some ground for himself, besides a high salary, but—"

"Oh!" said I, interrupting him, "do not put in a *but*, for that is the very place we want."

"Yes, Aunt Kitty," said Harriet, eagerly, "that is the very place."

"I fear," said my brother, smiling at her earnestness, "that it is a place which even Aunt Kitty with all her influence cannot get, for Mr. Dickinson declared he was determined never again to employ a man who had children, and you know his determination is not easily changed."

Still, discouraging as the case seemed, I resolved to try, and ordering the carriage, I asked

Harriet if she would like to go with me. "No, thank you, Aunt Kitty. I would like the drive, but Mr. Dickinson looks so cross I am always afraid he is going to scold me."

"Did you not tell me, when we were last there, that you would never be afraid of him again, after seeing him play so good-humoredly with William Temple?"

"Oh yes, Aunt Kitty; and now I remember that, I think I will go, if you will ask Mrs. Temple, when we get there, to let me play with William in the nursery."

Harriet was soon ready, and as the day was bright and the road good, we had a very pleasant drive of a mile and a half to Mr. Dickinson's. Before I tell you of our visit, however, you would perhaps like to hear something of Mr. Dickinson himself, of Mrs. Temple, and of little William.

CHAPTER VIII.

VISIT TO FLOWERHILL.

MR. DICKINSON was an elderly gentleman, who had had his own way pretty much all his life. In the first place, when he was a child, having had no brothers or sisters, and being of course a great pet with his father—his mother died when he was too young to remember her—he was seldom contradicted or opposed in anything. When he was about fifteen his father brought home another mother for him, but as he was then at school, he was little under her control. In about a year she too died, leaving a little girl who was his half-sister. As he loved this sister very much, and was not a selfish boy, he would, I doubt not, some-

times have given up his will to her, but she was taken away by an aunt, who took care of her, and with whom she always lived till she married. This sister is Mrs. Temple, and a very pleasant woman she is, and dearly does she love her brother William, as she showed by naming her first son after him. When Mr. Dickinson's father died, he was still a very young man. As he was rich, had nothing to keep him at home, and was desirous of seeing other countries, he went to England, and was for several years travelling in Great Britain and on the continent of Europe. He could tell very pleasant stories of what he had seen and heard abroad, but he always ended by saying he had never seen any place which he liked half so well as Flowerhill. This was the name he had given to his home.

And well might he like it, for it was indeed a beautiful place. The house was built on the side of a hill. It had no up-stairs, being only one story high, yet it was so large that a dozen chil-

dren might have played in one part of it without disturbing Mr. Dickinson in the other. Then it was shaded by such beautiful large old elm-trees. And the garden—there was not such another garden in the country, for Mr. Dickinson had employed a very skilful English gardener, who had laid it out with great taste, and he was constantly buying for it choice and beautiful flowers. People must have something to pet. Now Mr. Dickinson being a single man, who had no children to pet, had learned to make pets of his flowers.

You will probably think, from all I have said, that Mr. Dickinson, with no one ever to oppose him, and plenty of money to do what he liked with, must have been a very happy man. When you are a little older you will learn that those are not the happiest people who always have their own way. There were very few people who seemed more fretful and discontented than this Mr. Dickinson. Children, like Harriet, called him cross, and ran away from him, while older people often

thought him proud and ill-tempered, and were rather distant with him. Yet those who knew him well, liked him much, for he was a very upright and honest and kind-hearted man. You will be a little surprised perhaps at my calling him kind-hearted, but could you have heard from some poor old people near him, how often he sent them food and fuel in the winter season when they could not go out to work, and must have been both cold and hungry but for him, you would not think it strange. To be sure, they said, he would scold a little when he came to see them, if it was only because they did not make better fires or boil their soup more; but they did not mind this, for they had found out that the more he scolded, the more he gave.

Then, though Mr. Dickinson was never quite satisfied with children, who either talked so loud that they made his head ache, or so low that he could not hear them, and if they walked out with him were certain to tread either on his feet or his flowers, he was always very careful that they

should not get hurt when near him, and would often spend his money and give himself some trouble to gratify their wishes, if they were not unreasonable. Mrs. Temple and her two children, William, who was about six years old, and Flora, who was nearly four years younger, had been spending the summer with Mr. Dickinson; and William, who was a fine, spirited boy, was a great deal with his uncle, and took more liberties with him than I believe anybody—boy or man—had ever done before.

In driving to Mr. Dickinson's from my house, the road wound around his garden, and passed, on the other side, the house which had been built for his gardener. This was a very pretty cottage, with another garden at the back of it, which, though much smaller than Mr. Dickinson's, and very simply laid out, looked scarcely less pleasing,—with its raspberry and strawberry vines—its currant and gooseberry bushes—its roses and pinks, and its little arbor of grapes, over the en-

trance to which hung the fragrant honeysuckle and bright red woodbine. The house was shut up, but looked as if it might have quite room enough for Mr. Graham's family. Harriet was sure it was just the thing, and even managed, in the minute we were passing, to get a peep into the poultry-yard, and to ascertain that here was good accommodation for all Jessie's ducks and chickens.

We found Mr. Dickinson at home. He was reading to his sister, Mrs. Temple, as she sat at work in a room with sashed doors opening into the garden. One of these doors was open, and William Temple soon appeared at it, calling out "Uncle, do come here and tell me what this beautiful flower is named?"

"Not now, sir, not now," said Mr. Dickinson; and then, before William could speak, added, "Pray, sir, do you not see the ladies, that you take no notice of them?"

William came in, and having spoken to me and to Harriet, who was a great favorite with him,

he waited patiently till there was a pause in the conversation, when he edged up to his uncle, and taking his hand said, "Come, now, uncle,—do come—it will not take you two minutes, and I must know the name of that flower,—it is the handsomest thing I ever saw in my life."

"You are very persevering, sir," said Mr. Dickinson, but at the same time rose and suffered the little boy to lead him off.

Mrs. Temple asked if I would not follow them and see this wonderful flower ; to which I readily agreed, as I thought while in the garden I might find a very good opportunity to speak to Mr. Dickinson about his gardener. We soon came up with William and his uncle. They were standing by a large tub, in which was the flower William had so much admired. It was indeed a splendid plant. When near enough, I heard Mr. Dickinson pronouncing its name very slowly, while William carefully repeated it after him. It was so long that I fear poor William with all his trouble did not re-

member it long; yet, as you may like to know it, I will tell it to you. It was a *Cactus Grandiflora*. The flower was not yet fully open, and on my saying I had never seen one before, Mr. Dickinson begged that I would drive over the next day and look at it in greater perfection, which I promised to do, if the weather remained pleasant. As we returned to the house William drew Harriet off into another walk. Mr. Dickinson looked after them for a moment, and then said, turning to me, "William is the only child I ever saw who at six years old might be trusted in a garden without fear. He will not pluck a leaf without permission."

"Well taught children never do," said I.

"Then, ma'am," he replied, "there are very few well taught children. I have just had to part with a most admirable gardener, because his children were in this respect so ill taught, that they did my flowers more harm than he, with all his skill, could do them good."

"Have you supplied his place yet?" I inquired.

"No, ma'am, I have not. I am determined to engage no one who has children, and I have not yet heard of one who has none."

"Would it not be as well if you could find one whose children were in this respect as well taught as William Temple?"

"That, ma'am, I think would be even more difficult."

"It is perhaps not common, but I know a man who would, I think, suit you in all respects."

"Not if he have children, ma'am," said Mr. Dickinson, with a very determined air.

"You have seen his children, and I think must acknowledge them to be well behaved, for it is of Mr. Graham, my brother's gardener, that I speak."

"I never saw his children in a garden, ma'am," said Mr. Dickinson.

"Suppose I give you an opportunity of doing

so," said I, "by bringing his eldest daughter over with me to-morrow. She is, I assure you, a great favorite both with Harriet and with me."

Before Mr. Dickinson could reply to me, Mrs. Temple asked if my brother was going to give up his gardener, that I was seeking other employment for him. I replied that my brother would part with him very unwillingly, but that Mr. Graham had met with great losses, and unless he could obtain a more profitable situation, would have to move away to some distant part of the country where living was cheaper, and where his large family might therefore be more easily supported. I saw that Mr. Dickinson was listening to me, though he said nothing; so, still speaking to Mrs. Temple, I explained the cause of Mr. Graham's difficulties, and then added, "It is for the aged mother of Mr. Graham that I feel this change most. Your brother and I were children when she came to this country with her husband, who soon died, leaving her with this son to sup-

port, and nothing but her own labor with which to do it. Your father and some other friends offered her the means of going back to her own family in Scotland. She thanked them, but said, there was no home so dear to her as that where she had lived with her husband, and that she could not leave him, even in his grave, alone with strangers. And now—”

“I will tell you what I will do, ma’am,” said Mr. Dickinson, “I will lend Mr. Graham the money to pay for his house.”

“Ah! but, Mr. Dickinson, how is he to make the money to pay you again?”

“I will give it to him, ma’am, I will give it to him.”

“That will not do,” said I, “for Mr. Graham is a proud man, and as determined in his way as Mr. Dickinson is in his. He will not receive alms while he can earn a living.”

Mr. Dickinson was silent a little while, then

said, "I do not see what I can do, for I cannot have children here, that is certain."

"May I bring little Jessie with me to-morrow, and show you that she, like William Temple, can walk through a garden without plucking a leaf?"

"If she be cautioned beforehand," said Mr. Dickinson.

"No," said I, "I will give her no cautions."

The children were now again beside us, and William, who had heard the last part of our conversation, called out, "Oh yes, Uncle, let Jessie come—do—she is the greatest gardener in the country, and taught me a great deal,—now I will see if she ever heard of Cactus Grand-i-flo-ra," pronouncing every syllable with great emphasis.

"For once," said Mrs. Temple, smiling, "I will second William's request,—let the little girl come."

"Oh, certainly, certainly, ladies, let her come. I have no objection to her coming—but, remem-

ber, I make no promise to employ her father as my gardener."

"And, uncle, Mary Mackay too, I love Mary Mackay—pray, ask Aunt Kitty to bring her."

William's influence seemed irresistible, and I left Mr. Dickinson's with permission to bring both Mary and Jessie with me the next day.

CHAPTER IX.

HOPES AND FEARS.

WE dined at Mr. Dickinson's, and as the weather was warm, waited till near sunset before we returned home. As we got into the carriage, Mr. Dickinson said, "I shall expect you to-morrow, if the weather be fine."

Harriet turned her head anxiously towards the west to see what weather the setting sun would promise us. It was just then under a cloud, but we had not gone a quarter of a mile before it shone out very brightly. Harriet clapped her hands and cried out, "Oh, Aunt Kitty, is it not delightful?"

"It is very beautiful, my dear, certainly,"

said I, looking at the cloud which glittered like the brightest gold in the sunlight.

“But, Aunt Kitty, I mean, is it not delightful to think that we shall have such a fine day to-morrow to go to Flowerhill?”

“Why, Harriet, are you not a little whimsical, to be so highly delighted with the prospect of doing to-morrow what, when I first proposed it to you to-day, you seemed rather disinclined to do?”

“That was because I thought Mr. Dickinson was cross, but William says he is not cross at all; and then, you know, Aunt Kitty, Jessie is to go with us to-morrow, and I am sure, almost, that Mr. Graham will get the place.”

“I wish I felt sure, Harriet, or even *almost* sure of it; but Mr. Dickinson seems very decided not to have any children about his garden.”

“But, Aunt Kitty, when he sees how careful Jessie is, do you not think he may?”

“We will hope for the best, Harriet. But

even should Mr. Graham not gain the place, Harriet Armand may gain a lesson from this business, and a very useful lesson too. Do you see what this lesson is, or shall I tell you?"

Harriet thought a minute, and then said, "You must tell me, Aunt Kitty, unless it is that I must be very careful in a garden, and especially in Mr. Dickinson's garden." This last was said with a laugh.

"No, Harriet, it is a far graver and more important lesson than this. It is, that you must be careful everywhere to do no wrong—not the least—for that which seems to you a very little wrong may be followed by very great evil, and by evil to others as well as to yourself. Those children who have offended Mr. Dickinson, I dare say, thought it no great harm that they now and then picked a flower, or, in their play, ran over and trampled down the beds in his garden; yet you see how much evil has followed,—their own parents have lost their pleasant home, and now the remem-

brance of their bad conduct may prevent a good man's getting a situation which would save his family from great distress. God has taught us, my child, that wrong-doing always brings suffering, but what, or how great that suffering may be, we know not. Remember this, Harriet; and remember, too, that when once the wrong is done, however bitterly we may mourn over it, we cannot undo it, and the suffering *will* follow—we cannot escape it."

"But, Aunt Kitty," said Harriet, in a low and hesitating tone, "if we are sorry for what we do wrong,—if we mourn over it, as you say, will not God forgive us?"

"Yes, Harriet, He will forgive us, and so take away from us the worst of all evils—His displeasure. He will pity us, and his 'loving-kindness' will comfort us under our suffering;—but the suffering must come, and either by enduring it ourselves or by seeing others endure it, we shall be taught how much better it would have been if we

had not done the wrong—how wise was that commandment of God which forbade us to do it.”

The sun had set before we were at home. Harriet's first inquiry was, if Jessie had been yet to feed the cow. She had been, the servant said, and had gone back home only a few minutes before we arrived. I told Harriet that after we had taken tea we would walk over to Mr. Graham's together, and invite Jessie to go with us in the morning

“And may I tell her, Aunt Kitty, all about your trying to get the place for her father, and beg her to be very careful not to touch the flowers?”

“No, Harriet, Jessie would, like you, probably feel almost sure of the place for her father, and the disappointment would be very hard to bear if he did not get it. Besides, I promised Mr. Dickinson to give her no caution.”

“But, Aunt Kitty, I may just tell her how

cross Mr. Dickinson is, so that she may feel very much afraid to touch anything."

"Harriet!" said I, "have you forgotten already William Temple's assurances that his uncle is not cross at all?"

"No, Aunt Kitty, I have not forgotten—I did not mean how cross, but how *particular* he is."

"I think you had better say nothing to spoil Jessie's enjoyment of a pleasant day. You would do no good by making her afraid to move. Mr. Dickinson would see quickly enough that she was not acting naturally, and would place no confidence in the continuance of such extreme cautiousness." Harriet still looked anxious, and I added, "I can trust Jessie without any cautions."

The evening was very still—so still, that, as we walked to Mr. Graham's, we could hear the grasshoppers jumping from our path, and the lowing of a cow in a field near us sounded so loud, that Harriet started as if it had been some strange

noise. As we passed the garden we heard old Mrs. Graham's voice, and though the fence was too high for me to see them, I soon found that she and Jessie were walking just inside of it, and therefore near enough for us to hear what they said. Had they been talking of anything which they might not have wished a stranger to hear, I would have spoken to them; but as this was not the case, and as I was interested in their conversation, I motioned to Harriet to keep quiet and listen to it.

"Ah yes, Jessie, it is a pretty place—a very pretty place," said Mrs. Graham.

"But, grandmother," said Jessie, "there are a great many other places just as pretty."

"Maybe so, Jessie, maybe so, but there are none, child, we love so well."

"But when we get used to them, grandmother, we should get to love them, should we not?"

Mrs. Graham was silent for minute or two,

till Jessie said, "Say, grandmother, should we not?"

"I was thinking, my dear, and I do not think I could. You would, Jessie, for the hearts of young people like you are full of hope. You are always thinking of the pleasure you will have to-morrow, or the next week, or the next month, and every change, you think, will bring some enjoyment. But our hearts, Jessie, the hearts of the old, are full of what we remember of the pleasures we have had already, and which can never come back to us, and we love the old places best where we can look around and say to ourselves—'There I had a pleasant walk with such a dear friend;' and, 'There I sat when I heard such a piece of good news;' and so on. Do you understand me, Jessie?"

"Yes, grandmother." After a while, Jessie said in a very low voice, so that I could just hear her, "Grandmother, did not grandfather live here?"

"Yes, my child, and I was just going to tell you, Jessie, that there is one move I would be willing to make; I would be willing to live near, quite near, the church, for it is getting to be hard work for me to get in and out of a wagon, and I cannot walk so far now, and though I am sure you take good care of grandfather's grave, I shall still want to see it sometimes myself."

Flowerhill was quite near the country church in whose graveyard Mr. Graham had been buried, and Harriet could not resist whispering to me, "Oh, Aunt Kitty, it will just do."

Mrs. Graham said nothing more, and when we entered the house at the front door, she and Jessie were just coming up the steps which led from the garden. Jessie was delighted with the promise for to-morrow, and so often repeated how good it was in Mr. Dickinson to let William Temple ask her, that I saw Harriet was quite afraid that Mr. Dickinson would not appear awful enough in Jessie's eyes, and that she longed to add, "but he

is very particular." It was arranged that we were to go quite early in the morning, that is, by nine o'clock, when it would be still cool and pleasant. This hour did not make it necessary for us to rise earlier than we usually did, as we always breakfasted at seven o'clock in summer. Yet so much was Harriet excited, that three times in the night she called out from her little room, to ask if I thought it near daylight, and she started up in the morning with the first ray of sunlight. As soon as she was dressed, I sent her for Mary Mackay. Before breakfast was on table all my company was collected, and a merrier company was certainly never seen, except Harriet, who, though pleased, was anxious. Mary jumped, and danced, and laughed, and sung, till Harriet exclaimed, "Mary, if you do so at Mr. Dickinson's he will think you are crazy. I am sure he would not trust anybody who danced about as you are doing, in his garden for one moment."

"I do not care to go in his garden," said Mary,

"I would rather a great deal play under the trees with William."

"But you must go in the garden, Mary, or you will not see the flower, and you know you were asked to see the flower."

"Don't be afraid, Harriet; I'll go in the garden, and when I do, I'll walk so," putting her hands down close to her side as she spoke, and mincing her steps as if she was treading on something she was afraid of crushing. I had a little suspicion that this lesson was intended by Harriet more for Jessie than for Mary.

CHAPTER X.

THE GARDEN—THE LITTLE AND THE GRAND FLORA.

As Harriet had been taught always to speak kindly to servants, she was quite a favorite with them, and her petition to the coachman that he would drive fast, made him put the horses into such rapid motion that the mile and a half was soon passed, and we were landed at Flowerhill before Mary had half arranged her plans of amusement for the day. Notwithstanding our speed, however, William called out, as we drove up, "What made you wait so long? I have been watching for you this great while."

Mr. Dickinson spoke to the children very pleasantly, and asked very kindly after Jessie's

grandmother. As he caught my eye, however, on turning away from her, he shook his head with a look which seemed to say, "Remember, I promise nothing."

William was so impatient to show Jessie the flower and to exhibit his own accomplishments as a florist, that he carried the children off at once to the garden. Mr. Dickinson looked rather anxiously after them as they went tripping gayly along the walks, and very soon proposed that we should follow them. I acknowledge that, confident as I had expressed myself to be, and as I really was, of Jessie's good behavior, my great anxiety that she should be particularly cautious, made me a little nervous, a little fearful that she might at least let the skirt of her dress brush off a leaf, and thus give Mr. Dickinson an excuse for adhering to his determination. I was, therefore, quite ready to join the children, who would, I thought, be more quiet when we were near. The first sight of them, however, set my fears at rest,

and I glanced at Mr. Dickinson with something of triumph. There they stood ranged around the tub in which was the strange and beautiful flower they were admiring, yet not a finger was raised even to point at it; on the contrary, they were holding each other's hands as if they feared their own forgetfulness. They moved away as we came up, though not far, and William Temple continued to repeat to Jessie all which he had learned from his uncle of the nature and habits of the plant. After I had observed all the beauties of this pride of the garden, and exhibited as much admiration for them as even Mr. Dickinson could desire, he invited me to walk with him to a distant part of the garden, where he had some other plants scarce less beautiful or less rare than this. Little Flora Temple, who, as I have before told you, was only about two years old, had held her mother's finger and run along by her side from the house, prattling all the way of the "pitty fower" which she was going to see. She now

refused to go any farther, saying, "Fola tired—stay, Willy."

Mrs. Temple looked at Mr. Dickinson doubtfully, but as if to show the confidence which the good conduct of the children had given him, he made no objection, saying, indeed, "William will take good care of her,"—so she was left.

With a lightened heart, beginning to feel as Harriet did, *almost* sure that Mr. Graham would have the place, I went. What happened after we had left the children, I must tell you as I learned it from themselves. It seems, that finding her brother too much engaged with Jessie and his new office of teacher to attend much to her, Flora became weary and teased him to take her into the house. "Poor thing," said William, "she is tired standing up. If brother Willy finds a pretty place for her, will she sit down quite still till he runs to the house for Nursey to come and take her up?"

The child assented. Now, unfortunately, just

by the Cactus stood a flower-stand, not intended for a parlor, but large and high, making a pretty ornament in a garden when covered with small plants, which were better sunned in this way than if placed on the earth. This flower-stand was in the shape of a half moon; the shelves looked like steps, and were quite strong enough to bear Flora's weight, or indeed William's. They were dry and clean, and seemed to him to offer a very nice and safe seat for Flora, especially as she would be within sight of the house all the time. William was only six years old, and perhaps does not deserve to be blamed very much for forgetting, in this arrangement, that as his back would be towards Flora in going to the house, and as the other children were standing behind the flower-stand, neither he nor they would be able to see her or provide for her safety. They had paid little attention to her, and supposed, when they missed her, that William had taken her to the house with him, while he had in reality placed

her on the third shelf, or step, as he called it, of the flower-stand. Giving her a few common flowers to amuse her, he ran on without thought of harm. Jessie was still occupied with the strange stalk and leaves of this wonderful plant, which she was every minute wishing her father could see—Harriet, equally intent on guarding Mr. Dickinson's treasures from the touch even of Jessie's dress, and Mary in looking for a weed, of which William Temple had declared there was not one in his uncle's garden, when they were all startled by a scream. It was William's voice—then followed a few eager words, "Jessie, look up—Jessie—Harriet—catch her!"

Jessie looked up, and there stood Flora Temple on the topmost height of the narrow flower-stand. Attracted probably by the voices, she had climbed up, intending, no doubt, to get down to them on the other side. William, who first saw her, was too far away to help her, and when Jessie looked at her, she had already become frightened and

was leaning forwards with her arms outstretched. Harriet ran around the stand to go up to her—Jessie saw it was too late for this—in one instant she was standing on the tub—the Cactus tub—the next, Flora was in her arms, the child was safe, and the flower, the splendid flower, the pride of Mr. Dickinson's garden, and admiration of his guests, lay on the ground. Falling from such a height, Flora's weight had been too much for Jessie. She had bent under it, and pressing against the stalk supporting the flower, it had broken, and before Jessie could raise herself, the flower was at her feet. For a time it was unseen, for all were occupied with Flora, who screamed as if she had really met the fall she had so narrowly escaped. Her nurse took her from Jessie, and moved towards the house with her, followed by all the children, without any one of them having even glanced at the Cactus. After going a short distance, however, the girls, finding they could do nothing to pacify her, returned to look for Mary's

gloves and handkerchief, which she had laid down and quite forgotten in her fright about Flora. As they came near the flower, Harriet was the first to perceive the mischief done, and to exclaim, "Oh, Jessie, see what you have done! What will Mr. Dickinson say?"

Jessie was a timid child, and Mr. Dickinson seemed to her the most awful person in the world. Distressed and frightened, she stood for a minute with her hands clasped, looking down at the prostrate flower without speaking a word, then suddenly looking up, said, "Harriet, I am very sorry, but I could not help it, and I must just go to Mr. Dickinson and tell him I did it."

"Ah, Jessie! you do not know all," said Harriet, "or it would not seem so easy to tell him that."

"It does not seem easy, Harriet," Jessie began—but Mary interrupted her, exclaiming warmly, "Why, Harriet! I do believe you think

Jessie ought to have let Flora fall rather than have broken that one single flower."

"No, Mary, I do not think so, but I wish anybody else had done it rather than Jessie."

"Why, Harriet?" said Jessie, "why would you rather anybody else had done it?"

"Because, Jessie, I would rather Mr. Dickinson should be angry to-day with anybody than with you."

"But why?" persisted Jessie.

Harriet hesitated—then said, "I may as well tell you, Jessie; for the only reason Aunt Kitty did not wish me to, was that you would be too sure, and there's no danger of that now."

"Too sure of what?"

"Why, that he would have your father for his gardener,"—and then Harriet told of all her hopes and fears, and of my efforts, and of the beautiful house and garden, and six hundred dollars a year which Mr. Dickinson gave his gardener,—“And then you know, Jessie, you would

not be too far to come every day to school to Miss Bennett; and see, Jessie, there's the church," pointing to the steeple, "so near, and you know your grandmother wants to live near the church, and this was what made me want you to come so very much, that Mr. Dickinson might see how careful you were, and then I was almost sure he would let your father have the place; but now—" and she looked down sorrowfully at the prostrate flower.

Jessie, who had listened with wondering and eager ears, looked down too and said nothing.

After a short pause, Mary Mackay exclaimed, "They are coming,—I hear Mr. Dickinson—but do not look so pale and so frightened, Jessie. I will tell you what I will do—I am not afraid of Mr. Dickinson—he cannot do anything to hurt me. Now, Jessie, do not begin to say no—I am not going to tell a story—I am just going to *let him think* it was I who broke the flower."

"No, no, Mary," said Jessie—but before she

had finished speaking, Mary had picked up the broken branch, and stood in the path before the astonished Mr. Dickinson and myself. Mrs. Temple had excused herself and returned to the house by another way some time before. There stood Mary with the branch in her hand—the branch, with its flower broken and soiled.

“Mr. Dickinson,” her voice faltered, and she evidently began to grow frightened, but she continued, “I am very sorry, sir, your flower has got broke.”

Mr. Dickinson turned first red and then pale. He said not a word to Mary, but turned to me with a look which I well understood—it said as plainly as words could have done, “You see how right I was about children.” This passed in an instant, for you know looks do not take long, and before I could say a word to him—before I could even ask Mary how it happened, Jessie stood beside her. She was very pale. Laying her hand on the branch which Mary held, she said

very distinctly, though her voice was low, "She did not break it, sir—it was I."

We were all silent for a moment, and then Mr. Dickinson spoke, "It was you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then, my dear," he continued, speaking very slowly, "I am very much obliged to you, for you have saved me probably from a great many such trials. Had you been as careful and well-behaved as this lady thought you, I should have been hardly able to refuse her request that I would take your father as my gardener, at least on trial for one year, and at the end of that time, I should, it seems, have had little of a garden to keep."

Mr. Dickinson walked on without another word or even look at the little culprits. And I walked on too. You will think me very cruel, and so I thought myself but a minute after, as I heard Jessie's low, half-smothered sobs, and the efforts of Harriet and Mary to console her; but

I was really vexed with Jessie, for you must remember I did not know how she had been so unfortunate as to break the plant,—the children had been too much frightened even to think of telling us that. Besides, I was on my way to see a new dairy of Mr. Dickinson's, and as I had asked to see it, he would have thought my leaving him unpardonably impolite. I fear, as it was, I must have seemed very inattentive, for I often forgot to answer him while listening to poor Jessie's sobs, or looking back to the garden walk where she still stood with her head resting on Harriet's shoulder, while Mary held one of her hands and talked with even more than her usual earnestness. What they said I must repeat to you as I heard it from themselves, since it is necessary you should know it in order to understand what afterwards happened.

“I would not cry, Jessie,” said Mary, “I would be glad my father was not to live with such a cross, bad man.”

"Oh, Mary! you do not know how badly father feels about going away. He thinks it will kill grandmother only to hear about it—and he might have come here if it had not been for me—I am so sorry I came. What shall I do, Harriet?—What shall I do?"

"Let us all go and beg Mr. Dickinson," said Mary; "I am sure if we told him that Jessie had done it all to keep little Flora Temple from hurting herself, he could not be so cross."

"Well," said Harriet, "let us try—we can do no harm—for he cannot be more angry than he is."

Poor Jessie was willing to try anything, though she had little hope. When she came near us, however, her heart failed her and she drew back. Mary, who was always ready to be speaker, proposed that Jessie and Harriet should stay where they were, while she went forward and told the story. This was agreed to, and we had scarcely entered the dairy when Mary followed us in.

Breathing very hard and quick, and looking quite flushed and agitated, she began, "Mr. Dickinson—Aunt Kitty—Aunt Kitty, I am come to tell Mr. Dickinson how Jessie broke the flower."

"There is no occasion, my dear," said Mr. Dickinson, looking quite fretted and angry; "I do not care to know how she broke it, it is quite enough for me to know that it is broken."

"But I want to tell you, sir," persisted Mary, "because I am sure if you knew, you would not be angry with her."

"Angry with her!—I am not at all angry with her. I do not doubt that she is a very good girl, and that I should like her very much, but not in my garden, Miss Mary—not in my garden."

I saw that Mr. Dickinson felt worried, and that Jessie's cause was not gaining anything from Mary's application, so taking her hand, I said, "Do not tease Mr. Dickinson, my dear,—tell Jessie Mr. Dickinson says he is not angry with her,

and that Aunt Kitty loves her better than ever for having told the truth so readily and firmly."

Mary looked very much dissatisfied, but as Mr. Dickinson turned his back to her and talked to me as if she had not been there, it was of no use to stay, and she soon left us.

"Jessie," said Mary, when she got back to her, "Mr. Dickinson is a cross bad man, and I would not mind him at all. He said he was not angry with you, but he was just as angry as he could be, for he would not hear a word I had to say about you—but Aunt Kitty says you must not cry, and that she loves you better than ever for telling the truth."

Pleased as Jessie was with my praise, it could not comfort her for her father's loss, or give her courage to meet the dreaded Mr. Dickinson.

"Harriet," said she, "I do want to go home."

"Well, Jessie, you shall go—I will ask Aunt Kitty to send you there in the carriage, and then let it come back for us."

"No, no, Harriet—then they will all talk to me and want me to stay. It's only a little way, and I walk every week to the church—why cannot I just slip through that garden gate and get home without anybody's knowing it? I shall feel so much better when I have told father and grandmother all about it."

"I dare say you will," said Harriet, "for when anything troubles me I want to tell Aunt Kitty directly, and your grandmother is just the same to you. I would tell her all, Jessie, for I am sure she would a great deal rather go away anywhere than to have had you tell a story."

"That I am sure of too," said Jessie.

"Well," said Mary, coloring up, "I did not mean to tell a story, but I do not see what harm it would have been to let Mr. Dickinson think it was I that broke his plant, just from seeing the branch in my hand."

"Oh, Mary!" said Jessie, "I know you would not tell a story, and it was very kind in you to

want to take the blame from me,—but indeed, Mary, it would not have been right, I'm sure it would not; and badly as I do feel now, I should have felt a great deal worse if I had not told Mr. Dickinson all the truth,—but good-by, girls," for they had walked on while talking, and both Harriet and Mary had gone with her beyond the gate, "I'll go and tell father, and beg him to let me tell grandmother all about it. He said last night he wished she knew, only he could not bear to tell her."

Jessie's tears had ceased as soon as she determined to go home and tell her troubles there, and Harriet and Mary parted from her with smiles, promising to beg me to go back early, and to let them go directly to her house.

CHAPTER XI.

TRUTH REWARDED.

I DO not know exactly how long it was before Mr. Dickinson and I returned to the house, but the children were there before us, and were already telling the story of Jessie's griefs to William, who was quite as much distressed for her, and as angry with his uncle as even Mary could desire. As we entered the piazza where the children stood, I asked for Jessie.

"She has gone home," said Harriet.

"Gone home!" I repeated in surprise.

"Yes," said William, looking very boldly at his uncle, "and I think she was very right to go.

I would not stay where I was scolded just for breaking a flower."

"William!" said Mrs. Temple, in surprise at his violence, for he was usually very gentle in his temper. Mr. Dickinson folded his arms and looked at him without speaking, as if he wished to hear all he had to say before answering him.

"Well, mother," said William, still trying to speak boldly, though tears were in his eyes, and he could not prevent the quivering of his lip, "I do think it was very hard that Jessie should be scolded just for saving my little sister from being hurt, or maybe killed. I am sure our little Flora is worth a great deal more than any grand Flora."

"Saved little Flora!" repeated Mr. Dickinson, "what does the child mean?" looking at me, while I turned to Mrs. Temple for an explanation.

"William is right," she answered, "in what he says, though very wrong in his manner of say-

ing it. I am sorry Jessie has gone without my thanks, for, from the account given both by William and the nurse, she has evinced extraordinary presence of mind for so young a child, and has saved Flora from a very dangerous fall."

"Fall from what?"

"From the large flower-stand which stood near the Cactus, on a shelf of which William seated her while he came to the house for her nurse. Flora climbed to the top, and would have fallen on the flower, or worse, on the stake which supported it, had not Jessie saved her."

"And in saving her broke the flower. I see it all now," said Mr. Dickinson; "but why did not the child tell me so?"

"I tried to tell you, sir," said Mary, "in the dairy, but you would not let me."

Mr. Dickinson colored, as if he was ashamed to remember how angry he had been.

"And Miss Mary Mackay, I think you had some intention of telling me a story; of making

me believe, if Jessie had let you, that you had broken the flower; why was this?"

Mary hung her head and looked very much ashamed, but answered, "I did not mean to tell a story, Mr. Dickinson, I only meant to let you think it was I, because it was better for you to be angry with me than to be angry with Jessie."

"You only meant to let me think it was you;—and have you been so ill taught, young lady, that you do not know that in deceiving me by your looks and manner, you were as guilty of falsehood as if you had spoken it? But why would it have been better for me to be angry with you than with Jessie?"—then, without waiting for an answer, Mr. Dickinson turned to me and asked, "Did I not understand you, ma'am, that Jessie was to know nothing of your plans, that I might see how she would behave when unrestrained by any cautions?"

"I did tell you so," said I, "and was, I assure you, true to my promise."

"Aunt Kitty," said Harriet, "after Jessie had broken the flower, I was so sorry that I told her and Mary all about it."

"All about what?" asked Mr. Dickinson.

"About Aunt Kitty's wanting you to have Mr. Graham for your gardener, sir; and that I thought you would have had him, and have given him that pretty house and garden, and six hundred dollars a year, if Jessie had not hurt anything."

"Then Jessie knew all this when she told me what she had done?"

"Yes, sir, it was this that made Mary want her to let you think that she had done it; but Jessie said she should never feel happy if she did not tell you the truth, and that she was sure her grandmother would rather go away than have her tell a story."

"She is a noble little girl," said Mr. Dickinson, "and her father shall be my gardener, and have the house and garden, and six hundred dol-

lars, and another hundred besides for Jessie's sake; and if you will excuse me, ma'am, I will order my horse and ride over to Mr. Graham's at once. I may overtake the child."

How happy Harriet looked—how Mary jumped and danced—how William, springing into his uncle's arms, kissed him, declaring he loved him better than he had ever done in his life, you may all imagine without my telling. As soon as they were still enough for me to be heard, I begged that Mrs. Temple would excuse me, and that Mr. Dickinson would order my carriage and permit me to accompany him, as I would not miss seeing Jessie's joyful surprise for anything.

The carriage was ordered, and in a very few minutes we were on the road to Mr. Graham's. We looked eagerly at every turn for Jessie's straw bonnet and plaided gingham dress, but nothing was seen of her. As we could not overtake her, and did not wish to startle Mr. Graham's family by driving unexpectedly to his house, we deter-

mined to leave the carriage at mine and walk quietly over. We had gone but a few steps from my door when we met Mr. Graham. He colored, on seeing Mr. Dickinson, and would have turned off without stopping to speak to us. I was sure from this, he had seen Jessie and heard her story, and that he felt a little hurt that Mr. Dickinson should have been so angry with her, for an accident which she could not help. Before he could get out of our way, Mr. Dickinson was up with him and said, "Excuse me for stopping you, Mr. Graham, but I have come to apologize to your little girl for my anger to-day, which I find was very unreasonable. I was told, sir, before she came to my house, that she had been taught to be careful in a garden. I find she has been well taught in more important things. She is a noble child, sir. I shall ask her to appoint my gardener, and if she offer the place to her father I hope he will not refuse it, for I shall be pleased to have

in my employment a man so well principled as I am sure he must be."

Mr. Graham was quite confused, and stood a little while looking at Mr. Dickinson, as if he did not understand him; then seizing his hand, he said in a hoarse voice, while his lip trembled like a child's, "God bless you, sir—God bless you. You have saved me from the greatest sorrow I ever had—not that I minded the money so much, sir, for thank God, I am strong yet, and could work for it again—but my mother, sir—my poor old mother, it would have killed her, sir. I always thought it would, and this morning when I summoned courage to tell her about it, though she tried to talk cheerfully, I saw she was struck down, and I knew if we went away, we should leave her behind—she would never live to go—and now, oh sir! I can only say again, God bless you!"

Mr. Graham could not say another word, for the tears came in spite of him, and covering his

face with his hands, he turned away from us, as if he did not like that we should see him weep. He need not have been ashamed, for I was sobbing, and even Mr. Dickinson's voice trembled as he said, "It is your daughter you must bless, Mr. Graham; but we will leave you now, sir, for I am quite anxious to make my peace with Jessie."

We both passed on, knowing that Mr. Graham would rather be by himself while he was so agitated.

CHAPTER XII.

A GOOD CONSCIENCE MAKES ALL PLEASANT.

WHEN we asked at the house for Jessie, we were told she was not there, having followed her grandmother, who, before she returned, had walked out. On inquiring in what direction they had gone, we were shown a footpath which led first across a field and then through a wood, down to a stream of water on which a saw-mill had been built many years ago. The old mill had been long out of order, and the spot where it stood was so shut in by trees, and was so still, that but for the occasional sound of a wagon rumbling over a bridge not far off, or the merry whoop of a child at play in the wood, you might have fancied,

when there, that there was not another person within miles of you. Mr. Dickinson and I both knew the place well, and we walked on quite briskly, he leading the way, for the path was too narrow for even two persons to walk side by side. We were quite silent, for Mr. Dickinson never talked much, and I was engaged with my own pleasant thoughts. In less than ten minutes we came in sight of the old mill, and the open space around it. In this open space, near to the stream, one large old oak had been left standing, the roots of which grew out of the ground and then bent down into it again, so as to form quite a comfortable seat. As we came near this tree, we heard a child's voice speaking, and Mr. Dickinson, supposing that Jessie was just telling her tale to her grandmother, motioned to me to stop. As I was quite sure that Jessie would tell the simple truth, I had no hesitation in doing this. Mrs. Graham was seated on the root of which I have told you. Her face was towards the water, and she was

leaning back against the body of the tree. She had brought her knitting with her, and her needles were moving as quickly and as constantly as if she had been in her parlor at home. As we stood we had a good side view of her, though she could only see us by turning quite around. As Jessie sat on the grass at her grandmother's feet, she was quite hidden from us, except the back of her head, a part of her dress, and one hand which rested on Mrs. Graham's lap. We soon found that Jessie's story must have been told before we came, for her voice ceased as I obeyed Mr. Dickinson's sign to stop, and Mrs. Graham replied to her, "Yes, Jessie, this is one of the places that I spoke to you of yesterday evening that I love so well. Many a pleasant hour have I passed with your dear grandfather under these shady trees, talking of old friends and of our home across the sea, and this morning when I heard that we were to go to a new home among strangers, I came here to mourn that I must leave it. But, Jessie,

this was wrong, and now I feel it was, for while my child and my child's children are true and honest, I have much more cause to be grateful than to grieve. If we carry with us good consciences, we shall find some prettiness in every place and some good in every person."

"How is that, grandmother? our goodness cannot make them pretty and good."

"It does not make them so, Jessie, but it makes us feel them to be so."

"I do not see how, grandmother."

"Look, Jessie, at the water, and tell me what you see in it."

"The blue sky and a white cloud sailing over it, and the trees on the other side—the water is so clear, grandmother, that I can see every leaf."

"Well, Jessie, when we came here last and the water was low and muddy—do you remember what you saw then?"

"I could hardly see anything at all, grand-

mother, and what I did see looked black and ugly."

"And yet, Jessie, there was the same bright blue sky above, and the same green trees on the other side. Now, Jessie, there is some beauty and some goodness in everything God has made, and he who has a pure conscience is like one looking into a clear stream; he sees it all; while to him who has a bad conscience, all things look as you say they did in the muddy stream—black and ugly."

"Now, grandmother, I know what you mean, and I know it is true too, for if I had told a story to-day, and so father had got that pretty place, I am sure I never should have liked it or thought it pretty again; and then I should have been afraid of Mr. Dickinson, and have felt as if he made me tell the story, and so I should not have liked him. But now, grandmother, I think he is a very good man, though he is a little cross sometimes, and I do not feel afraid of him at all."

“No, Jessie, those who do right are seldom afraid, for you know the Bible says, ‘the righteous are as bold as a lion.’ I am very glad, my child, of all that has happened to you to-day. You may have harder trials of your truth than even this before you die, but you will remember this day, and how happy you have felt for telling the truth; and you will remember, too, if all the good things on earth are offered to you as the price of one falsehood, that your old grandmother told you truth is better than all, Jessie,—truth is better than all. Will you not remember this, Jessie?”

“Yes, grandmother,” said the child, in a low earnest voice.

“So may God bless you, my daughter!” and Mrs. Graham laid her hand solemnly on Jessie’s head.

Mr. Dickinson and I had been unwilling to interrupt this conversation, but he now stood aside that I might pass on, as he thought they would be less startled at seeing me than at seeing him.

Jessie was the first to hear my step, and, turning her head quickly, to see me. She was on her feet in a moment, and said, with a bright happy smile, "Oh ! I am so glad to see you, ma'am, for you will hear me, and I can tell you how it was, and then I am sure you will not be angry with me."

"I know all already, Jessie, and am only angry with myself that I should have seemed displeased with you even for a moment. No one is angry with you now, Jessie, and Mr. Dickinson has come with me to tell you himself that he is not."

"Oh ! ma'am !" said Jessie, with a little start, though she had just said she did not feel at all afraid of him. She looked around and saw Mr. Dickinson already standing close beside her.

"Do not be afraid, Jessie," said he, "for, as your grandmother told you, those who do right need not fear any one. If either of us should be afraid, it is I, for I was very unjust to you in re-

fusing to hear your excuses, when I might have known, from what had already passed, that you would have told me nothing but the truth. But I have heard all since, Jessie, and have come to make amends for my injustice."

How Mr. Dickinson was to make amends to Jessie I need not repeat to you, for you have heard it already. But Jessie's joy—this cannot be described. She was wild with delight. Her grandmother was her first thought, and as soon as she understood Mr. Dickinson, she was at her side exclaiming, "Just hear, grandmother—just hear! Father is to have that pretty place after all, and it is just by the church—and you know, grandmother, you wanted to be by the church. Oh, grandmother! do tell Mr. Dickinson how glad you are."

Mrs. Graham's gladness showed itself in a way that Jessie did not quite understand. Tears sprang to her eyes and rolled down her cheeks, while yet there was a smile upon her lips; and

when she attempted to speak, her voice was so choked with weeping that she could say nothing. Surprised and disappointed, Jessie turned to Mr. Dickinson, and as if to apologize for what seemed to her so strange, said, "Indeed, sir, I am sure she is very glad, though she is crying."

"I do not doubt it, Jessie," said Mr. Dickinson.

"I hope not, sir, I hope not," said Mrs. Graham, who had by this time recovered her voice; "I am both glad and thankful—first to Him," looking up to heaven, "who gave you the heart to be so kind, and then to you, sir, whom I hope God will bless for all your goodness."

Mr. Dickinson soon left us, having an engagement at home. He was to take my carriage and send Harriet and Mary, who had remained to spend the day with William, back in it. I begged that they might leave his house in time to be at home by five o'clock, and I invited Jessie to come over at that hour to meet them. I will leave you

to imagine what a happy evening they passed, for though they said a great deal, and it all seemed very pleasant at the time, I doubt whether much of it would look very wise when written down. I will tell you, however, of three things which were decided upon. First—Mary Mackay promised to try to remember Mrs. Graham's lesson to Jessie, that "truth is better than all," especially as Jessie assured her that she had found it so; for that even before she knew of Mr. Dickinson's kind intentions, she had felt quite happy at having told the truth—happier a great deal than anything could have made her which she had gotten by telling a story. Next, that Jessie was to have Mooly back again, Harriet having begged her of me as a present for her friend. Last, that when Mr. Graham had moved, Harriet and Mary, and two or three other little girls, of whom the first named was "Blind Alice,"* were to spend an evening with Jessie.

* See the story of Blind Alice, by Aunt Kitty.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HAPPY PARTY.

It was the first week in September before Mr. Graham moved, and the beginning of the second before his family were so settled as that Jessie could fulfil her promise of an evening's entertainment to her young friends. They were all invited the day before to come at four o'clock, that they might have an hour to see all the beauties which Jessie had discovered, and all the improvements which she had made in her new home, and then, taking tea at five o'clock, might all be at their homes again before the evening became chill. I had a whispered request from Jessie, that though there were to be no grown ladies there, I would just

come with the children ; a request which you may suppose I did not refuse. When the afternoon came, I took Mary and Alice and two other little girls with me in the carriage, while Harriet rode her own pony. Jessie was waiting in the piazza to welcome us, and William Temple stood gallantly ready to help us from the carriage ; and before the hour was gone, every nook and corner of the poultry-yard and garden had been explored. They were both in very nice order, and Alice, as Jessie led her around the garden, was constantly exclaiming, " How delightful !" while she inhaled the perfume of roses and pinks, and honeysuckles and jessamines. It was too late for strawberries or raspberries, but when this garden was made, Mr. Dickinson had had some fine peach and pear trees set in it, and these were now covered with ripe fruit, and from the grape-vine hung large clusters of the rich purple grape. The table for the children was spread under the grape-arbor, and when at five o'clock they were called to it, they

found,—not cakes and sweetmeats and tea,—but a dish of warm, light biscuits, of Mrs. Graham's own making—a bowl of soft peaches with cream and sugar—baskets of pears and grapes, and a cup of Mooly's rich milk for each child. The sun was low, and only a few of its rays found their way through the reddish-colored grape-leaves into the arbor ; and, sure I am, those rays never fell upon a happier group. They were still enjoying their feast, when hearing some one speak to Mr. Graham, who was busy propping up an overloaded branch of a pear-tree, I looked around and saw Mrs. Temple and Mr. Dickinson with Flora Temple in his arms, coming towards the arbor.

“ Mr. Graham,” I heard Mr. Dickinson say, “ why have you not taken your little visitors through the other garden ? ”

“ Why, sir,” said Mr. Graham, “ though they are all very good children, they are not just as used to gardens as Jessie, and they might be care-

less—but if you would let me, I would like to take that poor blind child through the greenhouse, for she is so fond of flowers, and I doubt if she ever smelt a lemon blossom.”

“Certainly, Mr. Graham, I shall be pleased to have you take her.”

Mrs. Temple took Flora from her brother and joined the little party under the arbor, while Mr. Dickinson remained outside, seemingly engaged with Mr. Graham, but I suspect much more attentive to the merry voices of the children. At length William called him in, and I am sure no one who saw him then for the first time would have called him “the cross Mr. Dickinson.” I said this to old Mrs. Graham, and her reply was, “Nothing, I think, ma’am, makes people so pleasant and good-humored as seeing happy faces,—especially when they know, as Mr. Dickinson does, that they made the happiness.”

Our party separated in good time, but not before

Mr. Graham had taken Alice to the green-house. She went with him, not knowing where he was taking her, and was so delighted with the strange perfume, and so curious to know from what it came, that Mr. Dickinson, who had followed them, cut off a cluster of flowers from a lemon-tree for her. After this, the highest expression of satisfaction with anything which Alice ever gave, was to say, "It is almost as pleasant as Mr. Dickinson's green-house."

When William was leading me to the carriage, he begged me to put my head down, as he wanted to tell me a secret. I did so, and he whispered, "I am coming to spend Christmas with my uncle, and I told him I wanted to see a play acted, for I never saw one; and he says I shall see one then and act in it too, and he will write it himself, and it is to be called, 'All for Truth, or the Flower well Lost.'"

That I shall have an invitation to see this play I have little doubt; so my next story for you may

be of Christmas merry-making at Flowerhill—at the cross Mr. Dickinson's. Let this teach my little readers, that if children are good and pleasant themselves, they will seldom find any one cross to them long.

THE END

